

VZCZCXRO7213  
RR RUEHMA RUEHPA  
DE RUEHDK #1546 3631447  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 291447Z DEC 09  
FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3528  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS DAKAR 001546

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR AF/W, AF/RSA, DRL AND INR/AA  
PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [KDEM](#) [KTIP](#) [PHUM](#) [SG](#)

SUBJECT: SENEGAL: Homosexuals Arrested and Released

¶1. (SBU) On Christmas Eve police in Mbour (a town 70 km south of Dakar) raided a private residence in the resort town of Saly and arrested 24 men who had gathered there to celebrate. Among the 24 arrestees were two French doctors. According to news reports, the party was "infiltrated" by agents of the police. Once enough "evidence" was gathered, police were called in. All 24 men admitted to being homosexuals and police reportedly found certain items in the house to confirm this, precipitating the arrest.

¶2. (SBU) However, the next day, all 24 men were released without any charges being pressed. According to further reporting, the police were at a loss to explain why the men were let go despite the fact that there was more than enough "evidence" to hold them. One police officer anonymously commented that this was a political decision and that, when the release order came, no reason was given.

A spokesperson for the human rights organization ONDH said that Senegal had recently faced a lot of international pressure over the issue of homosexuality and that the presence of two Frenchmen in the group probably led to their release in order to stave off the inevitable criticism that the government would have had to deal with had the men been formally charged.

Comment

-----

¶3. (SBU) What is worrisome is not just the blatant targeting of a specific group of people, but the amount of effort police in Mbour allegedly put into this operation. As a popular resort town, Saly is well known as a place where anything is available for a price. There are credible reports of child trafficking for the purpose of prostitution with tourists coming from Europe. Instead of tackling this heinous form trafficking in persons, the police chose to focus on the issue of homosexuality, which is not even explicitly illegal under Senegalese law.

Bernicat